

Distinguished Lecture Series to welcome Christopher Wright, Ph.D.

By Monica Frazier

The NIEHS Distinguished Lecture Series will present Christopher Wright, D.Phil., of Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, May 6 at 11:00 a.m. in Rodbell Auditorium. The lecture will be hosted by Anton Jetten, Ph.D., head of the NIEHS Laboratory of Respiratory Biology.

Wright bears an impressive number of titles, including director of the Vanderbilt University Program in Developmental Biology, as well as professor and vice-chair of faculty affairs in the same program. In addition, he is the Louise B. McGavock Chair of Cell and Developmental Biology.

Wright's [laboratory](#)

(<https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/wright-lab/welcome>)

includes graduate students and postdoctoral fellows studying early embryonic development and the role that intercellular signaling molecules, known as transcription factors, play in dictating cell fates in different parts of the embryo.

The title of his lecture, "Reprogramming Within the Pancreas and Endoderm: Biological-Therapeutic Connections," reflects his research group's focus on finding methods to convert stem cells into pancreatic tissue for use in diabetes therapy. Using frog, zebrafish, and mice embryos, Wright and his colleagues are making great progress in this area.

After the seminar, NIEHS fellows will have the opportunity to have lunch with Wright. Organized by postdoctoral fellow and [NIEHS Trainees Assembly](#) steering committee member Sabrina Robertson, Ph.D., these lunches are a great opportunity for networking, and give NIEHS fellows a chance to learn more about lecturers and their career paths, as well as discuss scientific and career development issues. The variety of roles Wright plays at Vanderbilt make him a great resource for fellows interested in multiple career paths.

(Monica Frazier, Ph.D., is an Intramural Research Training Award fellow in the NIEHS Mechanisms of Mutation Group.)



*After his May 6 lecture, Wright will join NIEHS fellows for lunch and informal discussion.
(Photo courtesy of Vanderbilt University)*

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